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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 001295

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV MASS EG

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CENTER WITH
DEFMIN TANTAWI

REF: A. CAIRO 479

1B. COULTER-JONES 02/17 E-MAIL

Classified by Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone for reasons
1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador met on February 26 with Minister of Defense Field Marshal Tantawi in advance of Tantawi's March 5-10 trip to the U.S. and raised Egypt's potential violation of the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 through the treatment of third country patients at the International Medical Center (IMC). The Ambassador said that State is working to determine whether a violation has occurred and noted that should a violation be found, it may be necessary to notify Congress. The Ambassador said that while we look forward to working with the MoD to identify possible solutions to the matter, the focus at the moment is on determining whether any violation has occurred.

¶2. (C) Field Marshal Tantawi, who appeared to have a basic understanding of the IMC matter, declined to pledge that the treatment of third country patients would stop and instead focused on how to handle the nationalization issue.

Tantawi's advisor MG Fouad Abdel Halim said that the IMC treats proportionately few non-Egyptians. He estimated that since the hospital opened, IMC has treated 13,000 Egyptians and only 500 third country patients, including, but not limited to patients from India, Pakistan, and Nigeria. MG Fouad also said the IMC is losing nearly 17 million USD/year because the annual revenue is approximately 3.2 million USD and the Egyptian national and FMF annual contributions are approximately 11 million USD respectively. He said the IMC would need another "few years" to stabilize before the MoD could consider any sort of solution using Egyptian national funds.

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador suggested that should Tantawi's staff want to discuss the IMC matter with State officials during the Defense Minister's March 5-10 visit to Washington, officials from the Political-Military Bureau would be the appropriate interlocutors. The Field Marshal indicated that his staff would pursue this.

¶4. (C) In a follow up conversation on February 26, OMC's Deputy told Tantawi's advisor on U.S. matters, MG Ahmed Mc'taz, that it would be helpful if MoD could provide as much information as possible in response to OMC's questions before the Defense Minister's departure for the U.S. MG Ahmed said that this would not be possible -- the responses would be provided after Tantawi returns from D.C.

RICCIARDONE